



Volunteer Literacy Tutoring Program &
English As A Second Language Settlement and
Assistance Program
Revelstoke Centre

VOLUNTEER TUTOR ORIENTATION PACKAGE

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer tutor. Here at the Revelstoke Centre, we have two one-to-one tutoring programs: the **Volunteer Literacy Program** and the **English As a Second Language Settlement and Assistance Program (ELSAP)**. A co-ordinator will meet with you to explain the opportunities offered by each program.

HOW DO THE PROGRAMS WORK?

Both VALT and ELSAP offer FREE and CONFIDENTIAL tutoring to individuals 19 years and older. Learners are paired with volunteer tutors who build lessons around the learner's interests and goals. Tutoring sessions range from 1 to 4 hours per week, depending on tutor and learner availability. All tutoring sessions must take place in a public space either at the college, the Regional Library, or another space arranged by the tutor, program coordinator and the learner.

DO I NEED SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A TUTOR?

There are no special qualifications required. However, we do require that all potential tutors attend a program orientation and tutor training sessions. Tutors are also asked to attend professional development workshops throughout the year.

As it takes time for tutor/learner relationships to develop and because regular practice is key to the learner progress, we ask that tutors make a 6 month commitment to the program.

AM I THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB?

Find out if tutoring is for you. Here are just a few of the qualities needed to be an effective tutor:

1. **Patience**

Learning can be a very slow process. Sometimes tasks are quickly mastered; sometimes the process is slow. A volunteer must be patient. Learning must take place in a positive environment. Learning comes in many small steps.



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2. Positive Attitude

Many new adult students have experienced failure in their lives. They often have low self-esteem. For non-reader and writers just coming to a tutoring program requires a good deal of courage. Tutors must be non-judgmental and positive as many adult students lack confidence. Tutors should concentrate on what the learners get correct, not always on mistakes. For example, if a word is spelled incorrectly comment on the parts of the word that the student spelled correctly first.

3. Adaptability

When tutoring an adult, tutors have to be adaptable and open to new ideas and materials. No one way is the right way. If students bring some reading material that they need to go over for work, the tutor must be ready to spend time on that material rather than what they might have prepared.

4. Sense of Humour

Learning to read and write is serious business, but there is always a place for laughter and fun in tutoring sessions.

COMMITMENTS REQUIRED FROM TUTORS

If tutors make a commitment to the Okanagan College tutoring program, they are making commitments to learners who will be counting on them. As a volunteer tutor, one can change and influence a learner's life. This is a great responsibility and something to think seriously about. A volunteer tutor is expected to:

1. complete a tutor training program. There will be a 2-hour orientation session followed by 10 to 12 hours of initial tutor training.
2. attend on-going tutor workshops and sharing sessions (approximately 2 hours every 6 weeks). The goal of these workshops is to provide extra support and assistance to tutors.
3. meet with the learner twice a week for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Some of the tutoring situations may be once a week and some may be 3 times a week. It depends on the learner and tutor and what they are able to co-ordinate and what arrangement works for them.
4. spend approximately an hour a week planning for your tutoring session.



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5. to be committed to the program for 6 months.
6. to communicate regularly with the co-ordinator and the instructor in regards to the learner's progress, resources needed and any challenges you may face.

*If you choose to become a member of our team and continue with our training workshop, we would like to remind you that there are no guarantees that you will be matched with a learner. When making matches with tutors and learners, we try to take into consideration such characteristics as interests and hobbies, work experience, schedules and personal traits. Regardless of whether or not you work with a student, I am sure that you will find the training informative and interesting.

BENEFITS OF TUTORING

1. Make a difference in someone's life and give back to the community.
2. Share your knowledge with someone else
3. Learn new skills to add to a resume
4. Receive free professional development
5. Work as part of a team
6. Meet and share ideas with other tutors

COORDINATOR'S COMMITMENT TO THE TUTOR

Okanagan College volunteer tutors are an important part of the Volunteer Literacy Tutoring and ELSAP programs. The tutor trainer and coordinators make a commitment to their volunteers as well. Here are some of the expectations tutors should have of a trainer and coordinator:

1. to receive a quality 10 - 15 hours of training.
2. to identify learner's learning style and short term goals.
3. to receive guidance and support in both lesson planning and reading materials.
4. to have access to the trainer and coordinator.
5. to provide a safe and secure area to work with a learner.
6. to help tutors feel part of a team.



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7. to give the tutor positive feedback.
8. to grant some flexibility, i.e. Christmas holidays.
9. to receive recognition from Okanagan College.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either Simone Palmer (Volunteer Literacy Tutoring Program coordinator) (250) 837-4235 extension 6504 or BR Whalen (ELSAP Coordinator) extension 6505. Our job is to answer your questions and provide the tutors with all the support they need. We can also be reached at spalmer@okanagan.bc.ca or brwhalen@okanagan.bc.ca.